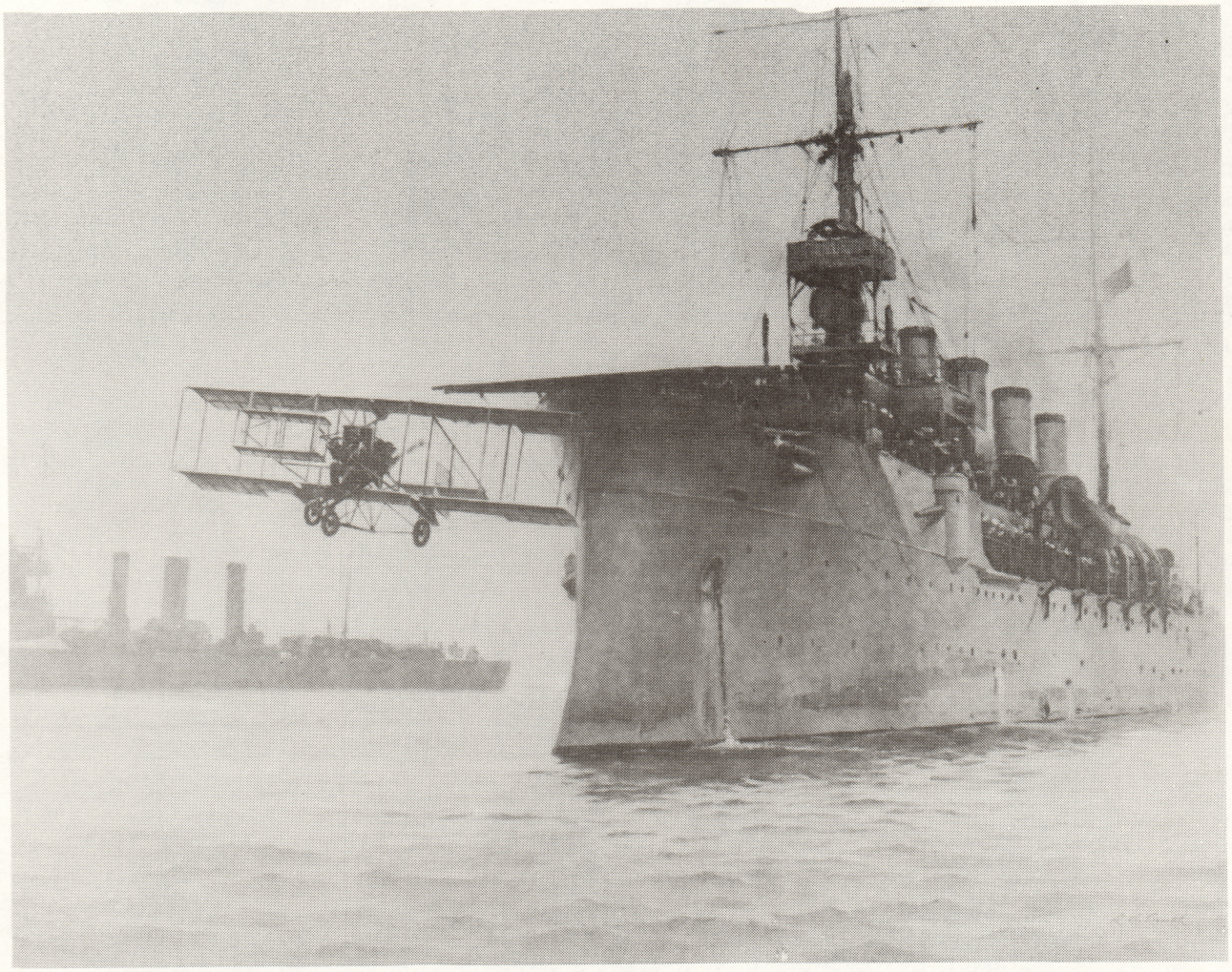
YANKEE WINGS©



NAVAL AVIATION

Vol. 6 No. 1

January/February 1987

I hope the New Year finds everyone happy, healthy and still able to fit into their Blue & Grays.

A lot has happened over the holidays. The F-101 is back at home with her paint job. She is sure goodlooking. Thanks Ace. The cover photo by Norm Jones shows her in all her glory. (My unbiased opinion?) We still need to put the stenciling on her this spring. The B-17 is really looking spiffy. The crew is busy scrubbing and polishing her inside and out. If they aren't carefull the shine from her will blind us all. (I wonder if they Also do windows?) Speaking of windows, have you checked out those nice storm windows that the Wood Shop Boys made. They are sturdy and reuseable. The Publications room would like to order three for next winter.

Plans are underway and committees are being formed for all the work for the upcoming Air Show Season. Please come out and help your division any way you can. Let's all pitch in and make this the best season yet. I am looking forward to seeing all the different Divisions Air Shows this year. I can't wait to see the Different people at Memorial Day.

The HQ Library is moving downstairs and Barbara Cook could sure use some strong arms and good backs to help move all those books downstairs. She also needs help with cleaning the room before she can put the books on the shelves. Retail Sales needs people to man the shop while the tours go through. Tour Guides need people willing to tell others about the planes and exhibits. You don't have to be a walking encyclopedia, just willing to learn and tell.

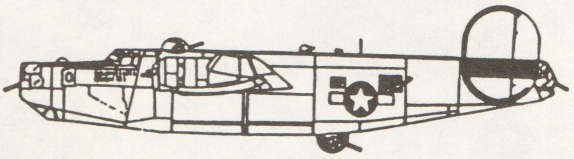
Inside the Pub. this month we have an interesting Tale Spins about Howard Hughes. We also start a new Dick Melton series. This on is about the history of Naval Aviation. Chuck Buhler is back with another investagative piece about our Blue Angel.

WELCOME!!! WELCOME!! to all the new members mentioned in Barb Sutton's article. If you see a new face around your hangar, stop and introduce yourself and atleast half a dozen others so that the new member doesn't feel like an outsider.

Just a reminder that your Publications Staff is still hard at work on the Offical Yankee Air Force Calendar. It will be for 1988. If all goes on schedule it will be available by Memorial Day. It will feature original artwork by YAF's own Bill Alcenius. (Who's artwork we all know and love.) Congratulations to Bill,who joined up this January.

'Till next month
K.Miller. Editor

YANKEE AIR FORCE



YANKEE WINGS©
Official Publication of The Yankee Air Force©

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Photos by Norm Jones and Bruce Allbright with the exception of the Cover Photo. That was submitted by Dick Melton. It is of a 50hp Curtiss pusher, piloted by Civilian Eugene Ely flying his aircraft from a specially built wooden platform on the bow of the cruiser USS Birmingham . This photo is from the 75th Anniversary of Naval Aviation Natl. Staff, Bldg 159E, WNY Annex, Wash. DC .

Line art curtisy of Signal Squadron Mail Order Catalog.

MEMBERSHIP REPORT
WELCOME TO THE YAF

It is thrilling to see the continued growth of our membership. Every week new members names are added to our roster. The presence of the B-17 and the excitment of watching her being brought back to her former stature, has attracted a steady flow of new people to Willow Run Headquarters. Many see that our work, to build a museum in which to preserve Aviation History, encompasses more than just the flyable aircraft. There are many aircraft to work on for static display, there is much work needed on the hangar, and the outside appearance of our home needs a lot of help. If you are able to give some time to the Hq. Museum at Willow Run, and don't know who to talk to about it, call or stop in the Membership Office. We will tell you who to get in touch with, so that you can work in the area of your choice. Membership Office phone number is 483-4140.

The following new members joined between July 19 and Nov. 11. Welcome to you all.

NORTHEAST DIV: #2444-John Getker, 2445-Salvatore Greco, 2470-Mike Tobits, 2471-Hisao Miwa, 2479-John Walker, 2480-Michael Nardi, 2481-Linda Keller, 2484-Alfred Bradley Sr., 2486-Rbt. McCann, 2494-Bonnie Ryan/Obertubbesing, 2495-Carolyn Hays, 2500-Mrs. Ben Rock, 2544-Thomas White(Sr. Life),2563-Frank Scimone, 2564-Geo. Spaulding, 2565-Curtis Mattikow.

MID-MICHIGAN DIV: #2501-Julie Fantini, 2505-Geo. Poulos.

SAGINAW-VALLEY DIV: #2474-Gary Reinbold, 2476-Randy DeGeus, 2478-Harry Tope(Life), 2482-Samuel Kasley, 2548-Doris Short.

WILLOW RUN, HQ: #2428-Dennis Haley, 2429-Edgar Boon, 2430-Rbt. Keon, 2431-Dennis Smak, 2432 & 2433-Gene & Sharon Curry, 2434-Rbt. Pegouske, 2435-Joseph Gabrys, 2436- Lois Hunt, 2437-Walter Prpich, 2438-Audrey Haddock, 2439-Paul Moon, 2440-Bea Hart, 2441-E. Dalton Ebbeson, 2442-Lloyd Morgan, 2443 &2465-Rbt.& Cora Conroy, 2446-Peter Berryman, 2447 &2448-Rich. & Emilie Lyckman, 2449-Geo. St. Germain, 2450-H.O. Foley M.D., 2451-Howard Rose, 2452-Penrose Reagan, 2453 A. J. Chappel, 2454-Adolph Haener, 2455-Ann Haener, 2456-Pat Larsen, 2457-Ann Sweet, 2458-Gary Hoeft, 2459-Gilbert Chintz, 2460-Richard Soules, 2461-Jos. Kaminski, 2462-Ralph Romska, 2463-Pat Buehner, 2464-Gene Burke, 2466-Barbara Bassett, 2467-John Caldwell, 2468-Dolores Rose, 2469-Marion Stokes, 2472-Constance Schwartz, 2473-John Kastens, 2475-Dorothy Loeffler, 2477-Leo Valliere, 2483-Linda Church, 2485-Dan Cronin, 2487-Stephen Allen, 2488-Byron Kuxhaus, 2489-Thomas Schultz, 2490-John Ward, 2491- Geo. Surdenik(Sr. Life), 2492-Thomas Longfellow, 2493-Frank Panisko, 2496-Doreen Carter, 2497-Kenneth Kachinosky, 2498- Roger Babb Jr. 2499-Don Harris, 2502- Janice Snider, 2503-Geoffrey Greeson, 2504- Raymond Previ, 2506-James Graham, 2507-Jack Jacobson, 2508-Carter Bishop III, 2509-Carol Gottman, 2510-Betty Gross, 2511-Norma Hainer, 2512-Richard Rice, 2513-Thomas Cain(Sr.Life), 2514-David Bennett, 2515-Mark Caddy, 2516-John Krawcke, 2517-Harold Anderson, 2518-Ronald Davis, 2519-Wm. Nicholson, 2520-Vernon Johnson, 2521-Johanna Balnius, 2522- Howard Robb, 2523-Richard Clark, 2524-Laurance Haynes, 2525-Eugene Jernigan, 2526-Douglas Sokolowski, 2527-Gordon Cummings, 2528-Gregg Ward, 2529 & 2530-Leslie & Linda Brown, 2531-Steven Wolf, 2532 & 2533-Harold & Adele Geiger, 2534 & 2535-Henry & Marion Beale, 2536-Henry Tyrpin, 2537-John Wittbrodt, 2538-James Miller, 2539-Larry Smith, 2540-Wayne Wilson, 2541-Paul London, 2542-Romayne London, 2543-Maynard Harris, 2545-Harold Tanis, 2546 & 2547-Al & Helen Schneider, 2549-Wm. Clevenger, 2550 & 2551-Lee & Virginia Peterson, 2552-Adele Mattingly, 2553 & 2554-Wm. & Shirley Byars, 2555-Ralph Dailey, 2556-David Kivi, 2557-Eric Bjornbak, 2558-Rbt. Towler, 2559-Geo. Brander, 2560-James Welsh, 2561-Francine Biondo, 2562-John Turo Jr.,2566-Jeff Bennett, 2567-John Sells, 2568-Christian Sucoe III, 2569-Don Mielke, 2570-Herbert Bennett.

As you can see your Membership Staff is keeping busy. This past 4 months we have processed 143 new member applications and hundreds of renewals from you wonderful people who have found the YAF a project worth your time and money, and who have signed on for another year. Thank you all for your support and encouragement in this task of "Giving a Future to our Past".

Barbara Sutton, Director, Membership.

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HOLIDAY SPIRIT

It has been the custom at Willow Run H.Q. to help the needy of the area with food baskets at the holiday season. This tradition has also been followed by the Senior Citizens group, the Van Buren Sunshine Club, which meets in nearby Van Buren Township.

Last year we combined our collected items with theirs and let them distribute the baskets. This year the members present at the November membership meeting showed their good hearts and dug down deep. A donation of $150.00 was sent to the Sunshine Club to aid them in purchasing items to round out the food baskets for the needy of the area.

Many thanks to those who contributed. We are so lucky to be able to share our good fortune with others.

Happy New Year to all from your National Membership Committee.

PARKING NEEDS HELP

Okay everybody! Listen up! If you've always wanted to help, but were unsure of what you could do for the Yankee Air Force Museum, now is your big chance to really helped out. Due to some technical rulings, it has been brought to my attention that the amateur radio operators who have helped run the parking detail for the past few events, cannot do it any longer. I have come up with an idea to help out in this area.

I need about thirty members to stand up and volunteer to work in our place. You need not be experienced in this sector. I will hold classes for parking control and it is not difficult. All you need is yourself and the will and drive to help the YAF make money and assist the public in the most professional manner. You will be a Public Relations Officer also, as you will be the first of our members to contact the public via this easy job. The Amateur Radio gang who have helped in the past will still be there as radio relay personnel, relaying information as to when lots are full and/or any trouble in the lots, or when you are in need of relief at your position, etc.. We will try to arrange shifts of two hours on and two hours off, or whatever is needed to suit, and every squad of five members will have their own radio operator who will be tied directly to each other squad and Security.

You will be supplied with all the necessary equipment, such as signs, directing wands, traffic cones, etc. We will also arrange for refreshments to be transported to your location.

So come on! Here is that one big chance you've been waiting for! To stand proud among the brave who give their all for the YAF, the many who can proudly say, "This is what I do for the YAF!", and feel good about it! So drop me a note or call me at home to inquire about a fine respectable position within our organization. Either my wife or myself will be glad to hear from you....Thank you

Ken Wolfe and Sharon Wolfe
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HELP WANTED!!!!

The old grey hangar ain't what she used to be!! Oh, No!! She is getting better. Over the past 5 years we have transformed the "old girl" into, while not yet a thing of beauty, a source of pride. BUT there is still much to be done.

WE NEED: Electricians, Plumbers, Carpenters, General Handimen (or persons). There is work continuing in the Museum Display area, the Library needs a new home, rooms need insulating, drywalling, painting and finishing. Electrical work is always needed. The Woodshop men need help with their many projects. We need men and women who recoginize the fact that there is more to do than just work on airplanes. The airplanes need a home, and the organization is growing and office space is needed in which to perform the many hours of work required to pull it all together.

Please contact me and I will put you to work.

Call (313) 483-4030 or 483-4140 or write to YAF P. O. Box 1100, Ypsilanti, MI 48197 att'n. Barbara Sutton. I'll be waiting to hear from you.

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A SHORT COURSE IN HUMAN RELATIONS

the SIX most important words:
"I ADMIT I MADE A MISTAKE"
the FIVE most important words:
"YOU DID A GOOD JOB"
the FOUR most important words:
"WHAT IS YOUR OPINION?"
the THREE most important words:
"IF YOU PLEASE"
the TWO most important words:
"THANK YOU"
the ONE most important word:
"WE"
the LEAST important word:
"I"

An idea shared by Mickie Trumbla
Dependable Parts Service, Dearborn
Submitted by Bill Bottle

WILL THE REAL NUMBER 5 PLEASE STAND UP?

by Chuck Buehner

No, this is not Bill Cullen hosting "To Tell the Truth". This is really an article concerning our Blue Angel F-11 Tiger and a short history of the F-11 and its usage in Blue Angel analogs.

To start the 1957 season, the Blues flew F9F Cougars for their first 18 performances. It was after that point that a replacement aircraft was sought for the Cougar. The Douglas A4D Skyhawk (the aircraft the Blues have used in recent years and due for retirement after the 1986 season) and the FJ-1 Fury by North American (Navy version of the F-86 Sabre) were flown and evaluated by the team. The lack of afterburners in both aircraft meant the team would have just another subsonic aircraft. That and the fact that since 1946, the Blues have used nothing but the Grumman aircraft lead to the selection of the "short nose" F-11-F Tiger. This was truly the most difficult transition in Blues history. In changing from the Bearcat (F8F) to Panther (F9F straightwing), the speeds were still subsonic. Now for the first time the Blues would be traveling supersonic, Mach 1 plus. This really meant that the high performance section, Angel Number 5, Lt. S.G. "Lefty" Schwartz and Angel Number 6, 1st Lt. Tom Jefferson, USMC could provide stronger crowd excitement. With the performance on July 4, at Newcastle AFB and the next 27 following performances, the "short nose" F-11 Tiger stole the show.

Besides Jerry Luther and myself, I see a few other members eyebrows pop upward in startled amazement. You're saying, "What do you mean Tom Jefferson in Angel Number 6 and a "short nose" F-11 to boot? That craft outside our hangar clearly is a "long nose" and its' number 5 is very plain - 5 not 6. You need glasses." Well, we see what the plane says, but lets dig into some hard evidence. According to Blue Angels historian, Jim Mc Guire, Tom Jefferson flew with the team only one year, 1957, flying two types of aircraft, the F9F-8 and the F11F-1 "short nose", and both aircraft were Number 6.

Boy, if that wasn't bad enough, here comes a real kicker. Since 1946 to the present, only one time was the blue of the Blues aircraft deviant from Federal Standard 15050 and that was the lighter blue (F.S. #?) used for 1½ years on the F11F-1 "short noses" (no wonder Jerry can't find matching paint to redo the insignia). That's true! The blue on our aircraft is not F.S. #15050 but the offyear blue from the short nose era, and on our beautiful "long nose" yet!

So what about the rest of our Number 5? Got you again! She's not really Number 5 at all but honest-to-goodness Number 1. There were thirty-six long nose F11's used from 1959 to the end of the 1968 season, and BuNo. 141872 was the original long nose Number 1 that started the 1959 season in the hands of the "Boss", LCDR "Zeb" Knot. She served as lead with Knot until Command Change in 1962 (with her dark blue suit, by the way).

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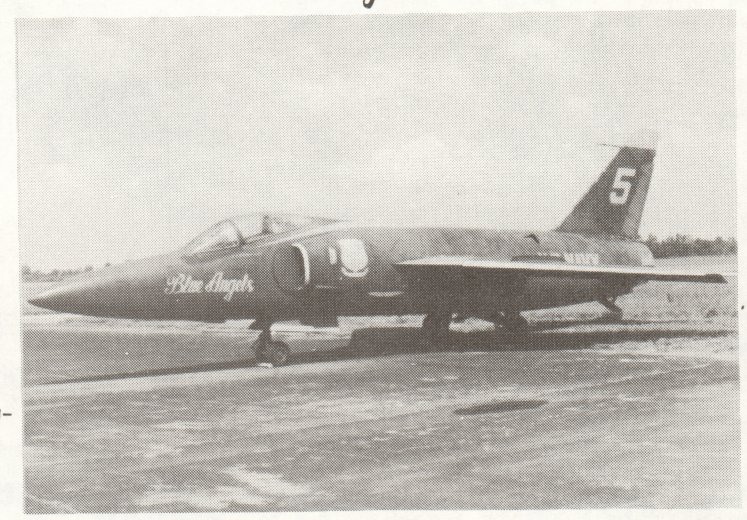
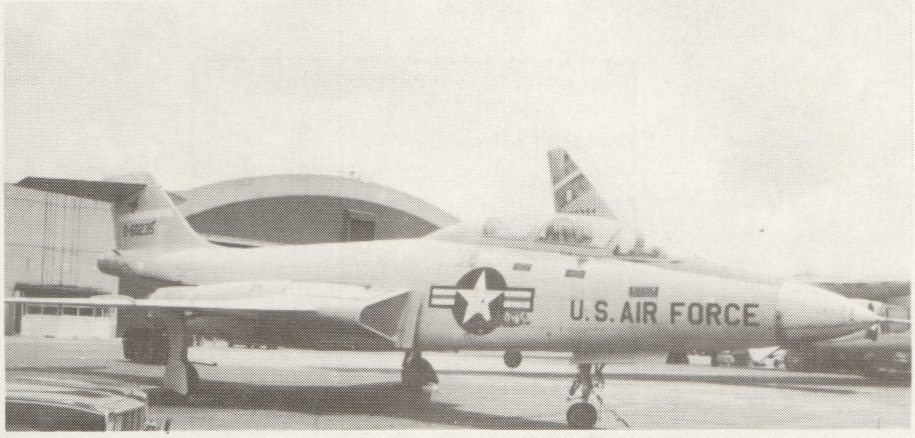
Blue Angels



I see a hand up from a member of the Restoration Committee. You want to know if there's anything else? Wellll, yes. The insignia is only half right. The upper portion, the plane in the cloud is okay, but the lower half aircraft carrier is from the present Skyhawk era. The carrier from the Tiger era was a high bow shot taken from about ¼ on the starboard.

Hope this narrative answers the mystery of who Number 5 is and also shows the perplexing situation Jerry Luther has in his continued efforts to restore the Grumman Blue Angel Number 5.

But you're not satisfied leaving the article in this shape; you want to know the reasons for this apparent deception on the part of the lender, the USMC. Come to find out, there is no concerted effort to fool anyone. Rather it was the Marine Corps way of honoring Lt. Tom Jefferson as being the first supersonic Marine and one with such a prestigious group as the Blues. Since there were not any authentic "short nose" Angel aircraft around, the Marines simply performed this honor with what was available. As to the insignia, the carrier pattern no longer exists. As to the reason for Number 5....perhaps an honest mistake??????

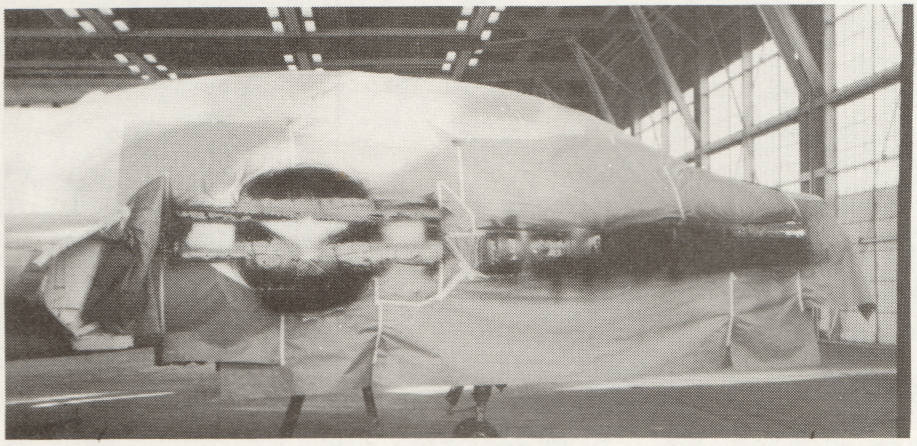


F-101's NEW COAT

The F-101 has a fresh coat of paint. This work was done by Ace Finishing and Painting Co. To show their appreciation for a job well done on this and other refurbishing jobs, the Board vated to give Ed and Joan Glaser Honorary Memberships.

Crew Chief Joe Miller and his crew including Bill Byers, Jerry Benardchik, K. Miller and others worked hard on sanding and preping her for the painting.The crew would like to thank the Board for their support and approval. They also wish to give special thanks to Treasurer Kathie Dallape, who's magic ways of pulling money out of thin air made it possible.

Top Photo: The F-101 at Wright- Patterson AFB before her trip to WR.
Second: Final coat of Gray applied
Third: The Stars and Bars were added
Fourth: The F-101 is ready for stenciling this spring.



PHOENIX

BEHOLD! THY WORLD PREPARES FOR WAR
THY BATTLES EVERYWHERE....
NO GREATER GLORY THAN TO SOAR
WITH WARBIRDS IN THE AIR!

AND FROM THY LANDS OF RIGHT AND WRONG
TO CONQUER OR DEFEND....
CAME GALLENT BIRDS A MILLION STRONG
CRUSADING TO THE END!

YET, MANY MEN SHALL WAR ANEW!
WITH MODERN WEAPONRY....
THY SOON FORGOTTEN, FAITHFUL FEW
HOW THINE ABANDONED THEE!

BUT, THOSE WHO FLEW THY SILVER STEED
OR CRADLED THEE BELOW....
DO PLEDGE TO MEND THY BOLDEST BREED
THAT THEY ALONE DIDST KNOW!

THERE IS A PERFECT JOY, I SAY
THAT ONLY FLYING BRINGS....
THY MEMORY LIVES ON TODAY
WITH RESURRECTED WINGS!

NO PHOENIX WEAK, NOR WASTED, WORN
WE HEAR THY FREEDOM CRY....
AND SO, YE BRAVE, NEW BIRD REBORN
TAKE WING AGAIN AND FLY!

John J. Turo, Jr.

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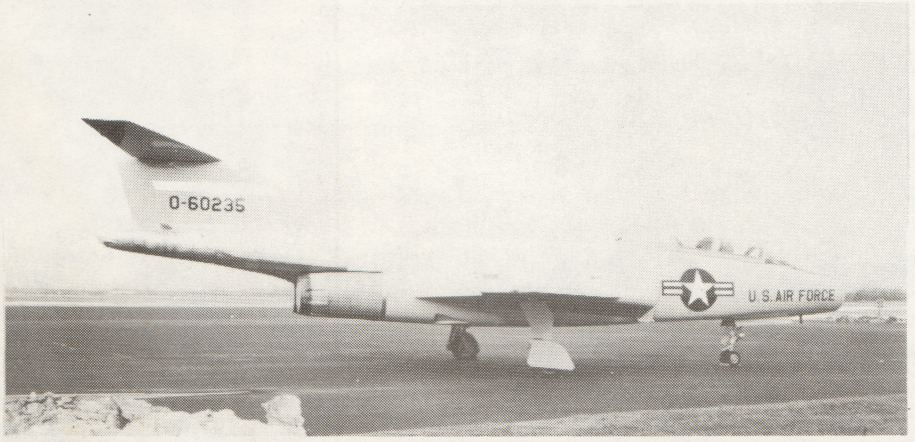

B-17 A&P's

"For courage above and beyond the call of duty"... should be engraved on an icicle to be presented to the B-17 Crew. The outside temp. on January 24, 1987 didn't stray far from the Zero mark, but the B-17 crew was hard at work on the plane and deserve our warmest thanks for their dedication to the plane. The B-17 crew meets at the HQ Museum on the second Wendesday of every month, at 7:30 PM.

The Spartan School of Aeronautics in Tulsa, Oklahoma notified us that they had recieved the 31 B-17 insturments in excellent condition and are delighted with the project of overhauling them.

B-17 A&P Mechanics
(R-L) John Graham, Bob Johns, Malcolm Warren, "Gil" Gilliland, Bob Babit, Tony Gruner, Director Walt Hart, Pat Nugent Fred Lockwood, Russ Bradley
(Not pictured: Norm Ellickson, J. Patrick Karstons, Perry Marcero, Lawrence Palmer, Bill Wier, Al Smith, Charles Goldstrom.

MUSEUM PLANS '87 SEASON

The Museum's planning for the first main event of 1987 has already begun. This year's event will encompass two days, May 24 and 25. Ceremonies and fly-in/drive-in breakfast will be on Monday only with both days having aerial demonstrations by the "Warbirds" and military aircraft. The Museum will have tours, display tables will be evident in the hangar and numerous aircraft will be on display and flying. Most importantly, will be the main emphasis on remembering how we, as a nation, fought for our freedoms and those who were lost fighting to keep those freedoms intact.

To make our event a success, we have to depend on the membership for it's contribution of time and energies. Now is the time to establish committees and lay the ground work. Much of the work can be accomplished now before the big push in May. Larger crowds attend each year and we have to "handle" all the activities. We need the support of each member. The members of Headquarters can visit the "Dog House" and sign up there or call the hangar, the Events Chairman or her Co-Chairmen for information. Divisional members can call the HQ hangar or one of the planning committee members. If overnight accomodations are necessary, Barb Sutton can make arrangements for you. NEW MEMBERS can assist in food service, parking, gift shop, hospitality, making signs, prepare mailings and many other committees. We do not require any previous experience in events for you to be able to help. It is everyone's event. We need participation from members to help in every area. Staffing the committees needs a lot of members for shifts so that everyone can enjoy part of the event, not work from dawn to dusk. BECOME INVOLVED--CALL TODAY! (313-483-4030. We have so much to be proud of. Contribute the valuable commodity of TIME. A couple of hours each day, or one day of the two. IT'S YOUR MUSEUM!

Rosie Goodes - Chairman
Co-Chairmen - Lee Bassett, Jackie Terpstra and Russ Maxwell.

EDITORAL POLICY

Yankee Air Force members and readers of YANKEE WINGS are encouraged to submit stories and articles, which concern the common interest and purpose of the Yankee Air Force Museum.

Responsibilty for accuracy in reporting rest solely with the author. Final approval as to content and date of usage is at the discretion of the Editor.

The deadline for YANKEE WINGS is the FIRST WENDESDAY of the PRECEEDING MONTH.

K. Miller, Editor

Waco CG-4A Assault Glider

The first troop-carring assault glider to land on Normandy on D Day --June 6, 1944-- was built in Greenville, Michigan, and purchased by Greenville High School students' sale of $72,000 in war bonds.
(A chronology of Mich. aviation)

DIAMOND ANNIVERSARY
FOR THE WINGS OF GOLD

BY Dick Melton

Part One - The First Decade

The Honorable John Lehman, Secretary of the Navy, designated calendar year 1986 as the commemorative period for celebrating the Diamond Anniversary of Naval Avaition.Yankee Wings enthusiastically participates in this commemoration by providing the following history of the first 75 years of Naval Aviation.

Genesis of U.S. Naval Aviation

Seventy five years ago, the United States Navy took its first offical step toward becoming a military air power. In 1910, Capt. Washington I. Chambers was ordered to keep track of the progress of aviation and to advise his superiors of developments that could be put to use by the Navy. Another duty was to provide the Navy with "suitable equipment for aerial navigation" and to teach Navy men how to use it. And on the 8th of May, 1911, Capt. Chambers, then officially designated as Officer in Charge of Aviation, prepared requisitions for Curtiss biplanes. One of them, named Triad, was an amphibian. Re ceiving the Navy designation "A-1", it was destined to become the Navy's first aircraft. From this event, May 8 is offically celebrated as the birthday of U.S. Naval Aviation.

Naval Aviation, however, can trace its roots back even farther. More than 13 years earlier-- even before the Wright brothers made their historic first flights from Kill Devil Hills sand dunes near Kitty Hawk on the Outer Banks of North Carolina on December 17, 1903-- the work of aeronautical pioneer Samuel P. Langley had convinced Assistant Secretary of the Navy "Teddy" Roosevelt that mechanical flight was practical. In March of 1898, he proposed that the Navy investigate Langley's "flying machine'-- a decision that marked the raw beginnings of naval Aviation.

But despite the Navy's early start, nothing concrete resulted until August of 1909 when two Navy men attended a flight demonstration by the Wright brothers and submitted a glowing report that led to Capt. Chambers' appointment over a year later.

Chambers, now acknowledged as the father of Naval Aviation, wasted no time. To help advance his concepts, he convinced civilian barnstormer Eugene Ely to perform a new stunt of taking off from a short platform on the deck of the USS Birmingham, a navy cruiser. And on November 14,1910, in just about the worst imaginable flying conditions, Ely's 50 horsepower Curtiss pusher barely made it into the air-- the first carrier takeoff and flight.

Some two months later, on January 18, Ely landed his Curtiss pusher on a specially built platform on the deck of the USS Pennsylvania at anchor in San Francisco Bay. Within an hour, he took off from the ship and headed eastward to his eventual destination,Selfridge Field.

In the following month, Glenn Curtiss demonstrated that a seaplane could operate from a naval ship. As a result of these actions, the Secretary of the Navy was convinced--Chambers got an initial appropriation of $25,000 for aircraft and was given the green light to have Curtiss start training Naval pilots.

Less than two months after it was ordered, the Triad was completed. It was a single hull pusher biplane with a 50 hp Curtiss engine and seating accommodations for a pilot and one passenger. On July 1, 1911, Glenn Curtiss flew the amphibious aircraft from the surface of Lake Keuka at Hammondsport, New York. After Curtiss' solo demonstration flight, he took Navy Lt. Theodore G. Ellyson for a brief training flight. Later that day, Ellyson-- the Navy's first aviator-- flew the aircraft on two more solo flights. And before leaving Hammondsport, Captain Chambers rode as a passenger with both Curtiss and Ellyson.

Early Developements

The Navy's fledgling air arm slowly improved over the years leading to the first World War. Capt. Chambers constructed a compressed air catapult out of scrap materials and on November 12, 1912, Lt. Ellyson was launched by it at the Washington Navy Yard. Within four years, a catapult was installed on the deck of the battleship USS North Carolina. On July 12, 1916, Lt. Geoffery de C. Chevalier was launched from it in Pensacola Bay--the first catapult launch from a ship.

In the war games of 1913 off Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, the airplane proved its worth to the Navy, spotting submarines, mine fields and the "enemy" as well as demonstrating its ability to deliver aerial bombs. Convinced of the airplanes usefulness as a naval weapon, Congress provided the funds to establish an air base at Penscola, Florida, complete with ten more planes. And on the 6th of January,1916, training of the first group of enlisted pilots began at our nation's first Naval Air Station.

Other Branches of Naval Air

On May 22, 1912, Marine First Lieutenant Alfred A. Cunningham was assigned to flight instruction. After two hours and forty minutes of dual flight instruction, he soloed for the first time on August 1, 1912 and was designated Naval Aviator Number Five -- the first Marine Aviator. As a result, May 22 is officially recognized as the anniversary of Marine Aviation.

Continued on page 11

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TALE SPINS

By Jack B. Stankrauff #0228

AN AVIATION GREAT

During the past two decades, many authors have belched forth reams of books and articles about Howard Hughes - aviator and billionaire-businessman with major emphasis on his eccentricities. Hughes' record flying accomplishments, his engineering and flying skills as well as his building an empire overshadow his individual foilables. In fact, on of his non-aviation projects is fascinating.

EARLY YEARS

Howard Robard Hughes was born in Houston, Texas on December 5, 1905. His lawyer father founded the Hughes Tool Company which made drill bits for oil wells in 1909. Hughes Tool made millions, and after his father died, young Howard took control of the company in 1924. During his childhood, he pursued his interest in mechanics and electronics which would later benefit him as a pilot and plane designer. Furthermore, he had very little formal aeronautical engineering training - yet he would display a brilliant insight later.

HOLLYWOOD PLAYBOY AND PRODUCER

He enjoyed his wealth: socializing, parties, night clubs, and the other penchants of a youthful, handsome bachelor. The new excitement of aviation completely captured Howard, who took flying lessons in 1920. Living in California, the glamor of Hollywood beckoned him. Consequently, he produced and bankrolled several motion pictures, including some of which were forgettable - "Scarface", "Cock of the Air", Everybody's Acting", "The Age for Love" and "The Racket".

"HELL'S ANGELS"

"Hell's Angels" - a silent World War I flying epic began shooting on October 31, 1927. Hughes spared no expense ($3.8 million) in producing the film with 87 Spads, Fokkers, Sopwith Camels, and SE-5s - all flown by 39 pilots. He even hired the famous Roscoe Turner to fly some of the sequences. After this silent movie was finished in 1929, it bombed dismally with moviegoers. Shortly afterward, Hollywood began to use sound so Hughes immediately re-photographed some parts and added a little-known actress named Jean Harlow. (Hughes would, in later years, make his own movies by buying the RKO Pictures studio.) The sound version of "Hell's Angels" was well received by the public who flocked to the box office after its release in 1930. Its success was overshadowed by the deaths of three pilots during the filming and Hughes suing Howard Hawks for lifting parts for "Dawn Patrol".

HARDLY FLEW BY THE BOOK

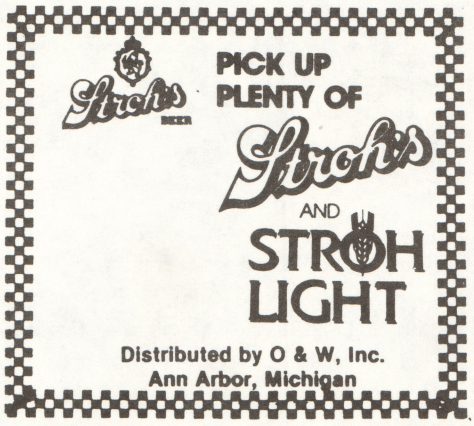
A striking feature was that Howard Hughes was never a pilot who flew by the book, yet he was an excellent instrument pilot. He achieved personal relaxation by flying. He did not have an aeronautical engineering education, yet he astounded his own Hughes Aircraft Company engineers with his excellent grasp of technical matters. He relished test-flying the aircraft he designed with an "I Told You It Would Fly" bravado as he grabbed headlines in the 1930s and 1940s. He viewed government aircraft specifications and regulations with revulsion (as in the case of his F-11 and D-2) and would go to great (and expensive) lengths just to prove a point - no matter how major or minor. He had and instant-recall mind for details of a particular plane or flight. He vehemently fought or fired anyone who dared tell him what he could or could not do. In all, he flew by the seat of his pants without regard for filing flight plans or briefing his crew and behaved likewise in his business. He was a maverick in every sense of the word.

FLYING HERO

Hughes thus began a life-long, sometimes tempestuous love affair with aviation. He qualified as a pilot in 1927 and received his commercial pilot rating the following year. The millionaire had a calculating, devious streak. He flew as a co-pilot for American Airlines in 1932 under the alias of Charles W. Lockwood for two months - his only outside paying job. His identity was revealed and he resigned. (This experience would later result in purchasing TWA - Trans World Airlines.)

On January 14, 1934, he made headlines by winning the Air Trophy at the All-American Air Meet in Miami, Florida racing at an average speed of 187.5 mph. The next year, piloting his H-1 racer, he set a series of speed records topping the 352 mark. (His flight gear? Suit, tie and helmet!)

His H-1 Racer was unique in 1935 because it was constructed with rivets flush with the fuselage surface, shortened wings for increased speed, and retracting landing gear. The H-1 Racer was powered by a radial engine the general design concept of which later was used in the P-47 Thunderbolt, Hellcat, Zero, and Messerschmitt Me-109. However Hughes failed to sell the H-1 to the military because it failed to meet government specifications.



This flying millionaire was now on his way. On January 14, 1936 he set a coast-to-coast speed record of 9 hours, 27 minutes from Los Angeles, California to Newark, New Jersey. One year and five days later, he broke his own record by two hours. For this flight (flown in Jacqueline Cochran's Northrup which he leased from her), Hughes received the Harmon International Trophy from President Roosevelt.

Speed and more speed was the rage of the age in the 1930s and Howard Hughes was flying right in the fast lane. His most famous flight was circling the world from July 10 to 14, 1938 in a Lockheed 14 Lodestar. Uncharacteristically, Hughes meticulously planned this flight with ground stations providing radio navigation fixes and spare parts and emergency landing points along the route. The press of the time called his aircraft "The Flying Lab" because he installed extra navigation equipment, three powerful radio transmitters, self-sealing fuel tanks, and an automatic pilot. (Their survival gear included a radio antenna on a kite, a solar still for making water and portable radios.) He and his crew of four seasoned aviators completed the flight at an average speed of 219.6 mph in three days, 19 hours and 17 minutes.Their navigation was so exacting that they were never more than 20 mi. off course during the flight. Cost to Howard Hughes for this trip? An estimated $300,000, but that was secondary when President Roosevelt presented him with the Collier Trophy.

HUGHES THE DESIGNER

Persistent behind-the-scenes politicking was Hughes' tactic when he sought government aircraft contracts. (He would be investigated by the United States Senate, too.) His H-1 Racer was turned down as mentioned earlier. Defiantly cool, he refused to let this failure stop him. He designed a twin-tailed fighter, but the Air Force chose Lockheed's P-38 Lightning. But again, he failed because his design did not conform to government specifications. (He went to court against Lockheed but the case went unresolved.)

Despite the fact that the D-2 medium bomber was turned down because its wood construction would shatter under fire and would absorb moisture, Hughes nevertheless proceeded to build an expensive prototype. (During World Was II, Air Force General Hap Arnold visited the hangar in which the D-2 was housed. A security guard refused the General and his party admittance since Hughes failed to tell anyone about the visit, so Arnold and his party left angry.) Needless to say, episodes like this failed to endear Hughes to the Air Force when it came to contracts. In addition, Hughes displayed arrogant indifference to the military when his contracts were investigated.

In 1943, the U.S. Air Force was without a photo reconnaisance plane. The Hughes design team developed the XF-11. One of Hughes' employees, Bennett Meyers, wheeled and dealed behind the scene and Hughes won a prototype contract. The first XF-11, piloted by Hughes, crashed in 1946, nearly costing him his life. The second prototype, again piloted by Hughes, flew in 1947. The Air Force still did not grant Hughes a contract.

"SPRUCE GOOSE"

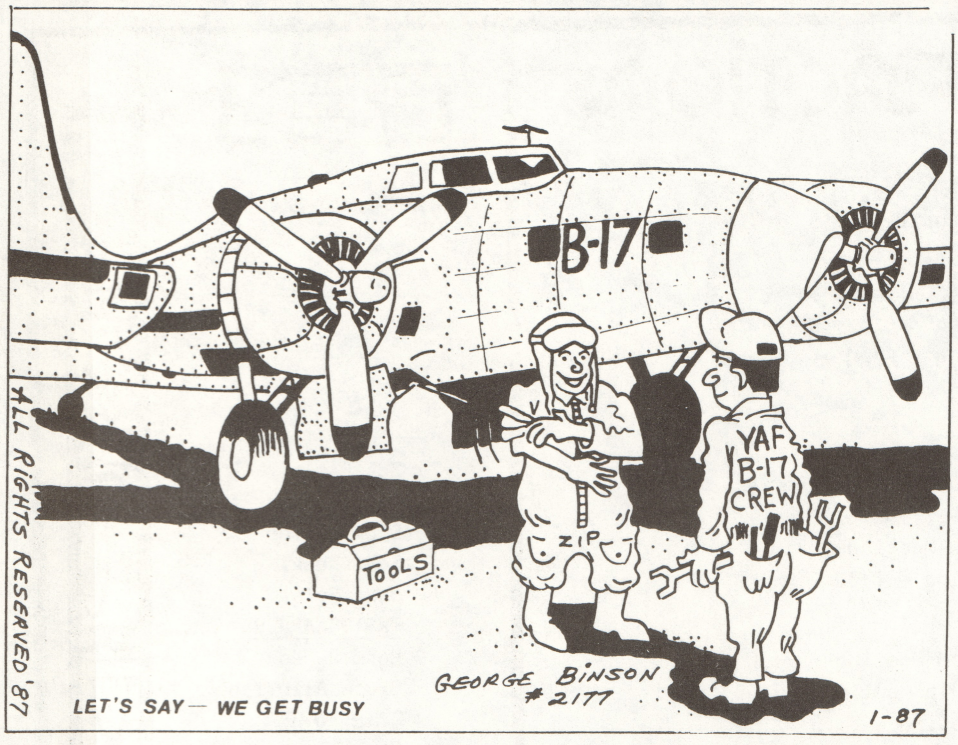
German U-Boats were sinking Allied shipping at an awesome rate during 1942. Howard Hughes and Liberty Ship builder Henry Kaiser discussed the menace and formed the Kaiser-Hughes Corporation to construct three prototype flying boats under an $18 million contract granted on November 16, 1942. Lack of organization and construction delays on Hughes' part as well as the Allies increased use of escort aircraft carriers and improved detection gear aboard escorting warships caused the U.S. Government to cancel this contract on March 27, 1944. Characteristically, Hughes wangled the government into letting him build one flying boat. This flying boat - the Hughes H-4 Hurcules - was the largest in the world. Nicknamed "The Spruce Goose", this aircraft was built of laminated wood, weighed 180 tons, had a length of 219 feet., and a wing span of 320 ft. and could carry 700 troops. This huge airplane flew only once - on November 2, 1947 with Hughes at the controls - for onlu one mile at a height of 80 ft.! It was later placed in storage at an annual cost of $1 million.

Despite the deficit-producing projects during World War II, the Hughes Aircraft Company produced ammunition feed chutes for B-17s, electric booster drives for aircraft machine guns, wing panels for trainers, assorted parts for B-25s and B-26s, and gun barrels.

THE PAUL BUNYON OF THE AVIATION WORLD

However chaotic Hughe's aircraft ventures were, he made an impact on the aviation world. His design shrewdness was always thrown into several projects at once. His reluctance to delegate authority sometimes drove his subordinates into confusion, frustration and sometimes resignation. Being a Hughes exectutive or designer during Howard's reign required an extremely resiliant person because he liked to work during the evening and early morning. He was never around when on-the-spot decisions were required. His phobia for personal privacy was legend - hiring security guards and using aliases. (Hughes was so secretive that writer Clifford Irving even fabricated a biography from clippings and pure fiction which he sold to a leading U.S. publisher for $750,000. When this fraud was discovered, Irving went to jail.)

After starting Hughes Aircraft Company in 1934, he stumbled through a series of aircraft projects (shown earlier) which deluged the company in red ink. But, by 1952, the company was making a profit for the first time providing the Air Force with radar systems for the F-94 fighter, Falcon air-to-air missles, electronic aircraft warfare systems, Army helicopters, (Hughes produced 7,000 OH-6As over a period of ten years) and the company eventually became a world leader in space communications, satellites (Early Bird and Surveyor), missles, electro-optical data systems, and other technological innovations after Hughes' death on April 5, 1976. (One noteworthy fact was that Hughes received over $6 billion in government contracts.) Hughes Aircraft, now owned by General Motors, is a world leader in the aerospace and aviation fields.



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MUG SHOT OF THE MONTH

This month's photo is of Barbara Sutton. Barb works mainly with the Membership Committee, but she can also be found mopping and scrubbing when needed. Barb has been known to pick up a hammer and help the fellas when nessessary.

Continued from page 8

HOWARD AND THE CIA

Among the many non-aviation ventures in which Hughes was involved, the most unique was his Glomar Explorer. Code named "Project Jennifer" by the Central Intelligence agency, the ship was secretly built to raise a sunken Russian submarine in the Pacific. The real purpose of this ship-building project was hidden under a cover story that the Glomar Explorer was a deep-sea mining vessel. Some burglars broke into Hughes offices and stole the papers disclosing the real reason for the Glomar Explorer. They offered the papers back to the Hughes organization for $1 million. The Hughes people refused, and the story was leaked to the Los Angeles Times. When the Central Intelligence Agency asked the Times not to print the story (they did), columnist Jack Anderson heard of this and wrote about "Project Jennifer" in his nationally-syndicated column.

LEGACY?

In many ways Howard Hughes did leave a legacy to twentieth century aviation. His racing records, record-breaking flights, and plane design characterized him as a canny designer, individualist and empire-builder. To fairly balance this viewpoint, the other side must be mentioned. He was a producer of lesser-quality (except for a very few) motion pictures, his Hughes Aircraft Company (he treated it as a cottage industry) wallowed in red ink because he failed to deliver on contracts, and his mis-management of TWA nearly ruined it. All in all, he did leave more legendary lor than a legacy and he will be remembered in aviation history.

Although personnel from Kill Devil Hills Lifesaving Station helped set up the Wright brothers' launch site on December 17, 1916, when Second Lt. Charles E. Sudgen and Third Lt. Elmer F. Stone recieved orders to attend aviation training at Pensacola. On March 22 of the following year, stone became Coast Guard Aviator Number One and Naval Aviator Number 36. Two years later, in May of 1919, he helped make Naval Aviation history as one of the pilots who flew the first transatlantic flight in the NC-4 Curtiss Seaplane. He also established a world speed record for amphibious planes and aided in the developement of the catapult and deck landing gear for aircraft carriers.

Today's Naval Air Reserve had its beginnings in 1915 as the Navy's Division of Naval Militia Affairs direct-organize an Aeronautical Corps. By summer, limited aviation training was made available for reservists at ation training was made available for reservists at Pensacola. But the first reserves to be designated as Naval Aviators didn't earn their wings of gold until 1917 -- the year the Naval Appropiations Act provided funds for the establishment of a Naval Reserve Flying Corps. A group of 29 Yale University undergraduates enlisted in the Naval Reserve Flying Force in March of that year after completing a civilian-supported flight instruction program. These pilots, known as the First Yale Unit, are recognized as the nucleus of the original Naval Reserve Flying Corps. (ED. NOTE- This is the first of a series on the history of Naval Aviation. The rest will be run in monthly segments.)

COMING ATTRACTIONS

FEBRUARY

3- Saginaw Valley Div. Board Meeting - 7:30
4- Headquarters Membership Meeting - 7:30
4- Northeast Div. Board Meeting - 7:30
7- American Aviation Historical Society - 8:00
(Call 562-3283 or 565-1169 for information.)
9- Finance Committee Meeting - 7:30
10- Membership Committee Meeting - 7:00
11- B-17 Crew Meeting - 7:30
11- Mid-Michigan Div. Membership Meeting - 7:30
17- Saginaw Valley Div. Membership Meeting - 7:30
18- National Board Meeting - 7:30
24- Wisconsin/Illinois Board Meeting - 7:00
25- Mid-Michigan Board Meeting - 7:30

MARCH

3- Saginaw Valley Div. Board Meeting - 7:30
4- Willow Run Div. Membership Meeting - 7:30
4- Northeast Div. Board Meeting - 7:30
7- American Aviation Historical Society - 8:00
(Call 562-3283 or 565-1169 for information.)
9- Finance Committee Meeting - 7:30
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11- B-17 Crew Meeting - 7:30
11- Mid-Michigan Div. Membership Meeting - 7:30
17- Saginaw Valley Div. Membership Meeting - 7:30
18- National Board Meeting - Willow Run - 7:30
24- Wisconsin/Illinois Board Meeting - 7:00
25- Mid-Michigan Board Meeting - 7:30

STAN REICH

NORTHEAST DIVISION NOTICE

General Membership meetings of the Northeast Division are held on the third Wednesday of each month in the Essex County Improvement Authority Administration Building, 2nd floor. Board of Directors meetings are held on the second Wednesday following the General Membership meeting, in the Yankee Air Force Ready Room.

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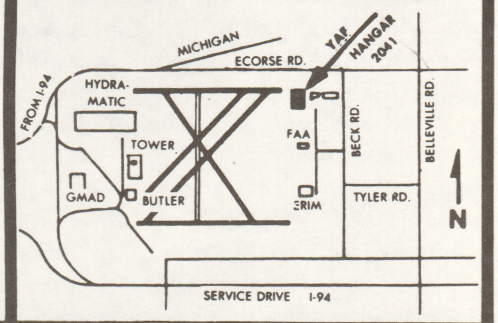

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